Plan, had estimated that an amount of Rs. 3456 crores would be needed to extend DD coverage to 100 per cent population in terrestrial mode.

In terrestrial mode DD coverage is available to about 90 per cent population of the country (including the population in rural and remote areas) and this is expected to increase to about 91 per cent after commissioning of the on-going transmitter projects. This process of expansion in terrestrial mode will be continued in the 10th Plan as well. Alternative technology options have also been included to provide coverage to hitherto uncovered areas.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Non-Utilization of Funds for development of NER

†4073. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that funds allocated for the development of North-Eastern Region are not being utilized properly;

(b) if not, the details of work undertaken through the said allocated funds;

(c) whether it is also a fact that allocation of funds granted by Government to other State/regions have since been discontinued; and

(d) if so, the details thereof region-wise/State-wise?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) and (b) Development Programmes/Schemes of North Eastern States are being funded from various sources. Besides the funds allocated by the respective State Government in their State Plans, all the Central Ministries/Departments (except those specifically exempted) have been earmarking at least 10% of their budget for sectoral developemental programmes in the North Eastern States. Financial assistance is extended to the State Governments from the Non-lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) for specific projects/schemes related to physical and social infrastructure. The North Eastern Council (NEC) also make provisions for infrastructure development projects in the Region.

The projects taken up from these various sources of funding related to development of physical and social infrastructure, especially education, health, drinking water and basic sanitation, electrification, road transport and

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

communication, manpower development, flood control, tourism, capacity building, etc.

There have been cases of funds not being utilized properly and this has been highlighted by Comptroller and Auditor General of India. In his reports he has pointed out that irregularities like unauthorized expenditure, diversion of funds etc. by State Governments have marred development prospects in the region.

The State Governments have been advised to ensure that programme/ project specific funds are released on time and regular monitoring of projects under implementation is undertaken. To reduce the possibility of non-utilisation/mis-utilisation of centally funded schemes, a regime of monitoring and inspections is followed. Only after receipt of utilization certificates, the second and subsequent instalments of projects funds are released. Staff of this Department have commenced field inspections of projects under execution. Five large projects have been identified for the CAG to commence concurrent audit during their execution itself.

(c) No Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Development programmes of North Eastern States

4074. SHRI RISHANG KEISHING: Will the Minister of DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION be pleased to state:

(a) the main thrusts of Government on the Development Programmes of North Eastern States;

(b) whether funds commensurate with the programmes are provided;

(c) the sources and quantum of funds available for these programmes; and

(d) the duration for which funds will be made available?

THE MINISTER OF DEVELOPMENT OF NORTH EASTERN REGION (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) to (d) Improvements in the infrastructure and access to basic social services especially education, health, drinking water and basic sanitation, expansion of economic and social opportunities for all, reduction in disparities, greater participation in decision making, provisioning of adequate level of consumption of food and other consumer goods etc., are the main thrust of the Government's development programmes in North Eastern States. These development plans have been formulated in the light of the broad